

42 The Battle of Balaklava : Sir George Cathcart's Morning Report
By Dr Douglas J Austin 42 [TWC 32(2) p29 2015]

As information slowly emerges from long-neglected archives, the Battle of Balaklava continues to fascinate many. Thanks to generous advice, I can present my annotated transcription of the Morning Report (dated 26th October, 1854) addressed by Lt General Sir George Cathcart (4th Division) to Brigadier General Richard Airey, Raglan's QMG*. Cathcart's original 4-page manuscript is included in WO 28/106 in the National Archives at Kew and has never, to my knowledge, previously been described.

My notes appear as [**Bold - italicized**] thus : [* "Airey was a *Quartermaster-general in the older sense of the word, i.e. a chief of the general staff but a different view of the duties of the office was then becoming recognized.*" (Encyclopedia Britannica 1911). I believe that Raglan, while in overall strategic command, left much of the tactical management detail to Airey. Cathcart was a distinguished and active officer, fresh from success in the 8th Xhosa War in "Kaffraria".]

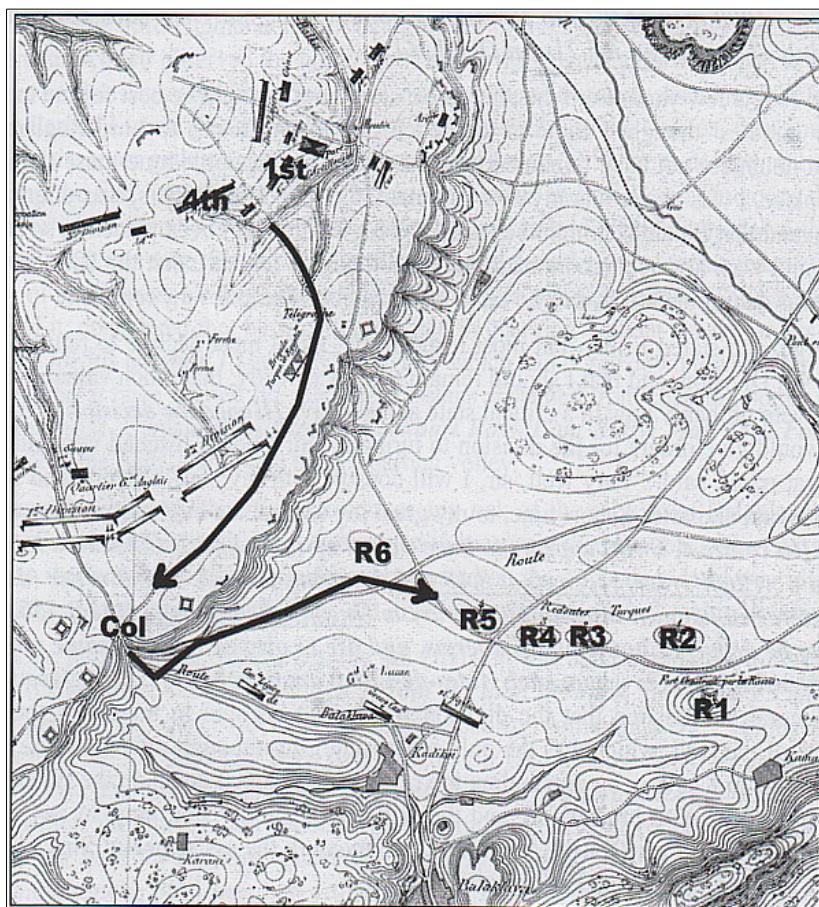


Figure : Suggested track for Cathcart towards Redoubts 6, 5 and 4, showing the 4th and 1st Division camps, the Col and the disputed redoubts.
(French Military map : Blondel: 18/10/1854 : Issued 23/11/1854).

From Kinglake onwards, a succession of authors have asserted that Cathcart seriously delayed his response to the Russian attack towards Balaklava and that he took too long to move his 4th Division, via the Col of Balaklava, down to the South Valley. They imply that Cathcart's alleged sluggishness adversely affected Raglan's attempt to recover captured British guns from the Causeway Heights redoubts. Kinglake's account, using details of the occasion provided by the (unnamed) staff officer involved, was first published in Volume V of the Cabinet Edition of his "*The Invasion of the Crimea*" (1877 pp 67-70) and was repeated in the final 1889 Edition. That staff

officer was Captain John Alexander Ewart of the 93rd Foot, appointed as DAQMG from October 9th, 1854 to 15th February, 1855. Ewart's more detailed account was published in Volume I (pp 264-273) of his excellent book "*The Story of a Soldier's Life*". Sampson Low et al, London, 1881.

The relevant extract (showing Kinglake's variations in italics) reads:-

"Battle of Balaklava Early on the morning of the 25th October a messenger arrived at headquarters, bringing information that the Russians were attacking our position at Balaklava. Lord Raglan and the staff were soon mounted, and away we all galloped to the ridge close to the Coll. On reaching this spot [Perhaps the battery shown in the Figure? Later, Raglan and his staff moved to location(s) directly overlooking the North Valley] we could see the shells bursting over the redoubts occupied by the Turks, and almost immediately afterwards the latter retreated in the utmost confusion across the plain, towards Kadekoi. Lord Raglan on observing the flight of the Turks [*ca. 8.00 a.m.?*] called me, and desired that I would immediately proceed to Sir George Cathcart, and request him to move his division, as quickly as possible, to the assistance of Sir Colin Campbell at Balaklava. I was just starting with this order, when General Airey came up, and said, "Remember, you are on no account whatever to conduct the division by the Woronzoff road." He said this with marked emphasis. I then galloped off as hard as I could go, and on reaching the camp of the 4th Division [*ca. 8.15 a.m.?*] found Sir George Cathcart dressed, and seated in his tent. I at once delivered my orders, upon which Sir George replied, "It is quite impossible, sir, for the 4th Division to move." I then stated that my orders were very positive, and that the Russians were advancing upon Balaklava. He replied, 'I cannot help that, sir; my division cannot move, as the greater portion of the men have only just come from the trenches. "The best thing you can do is to sit down and take some breakfast with me." For the third time I repeated my orders, stating that I had myself seen the Turks flying from their redoubts towards Balaklava, and that every moment was of consequence, as Sir Colin had only the 93rd to depend upon besides the cavalry. Sir George then said, 'Well, sir, you may return to Lord Raglan, and tell him, that I cannot move my division.' "Well, sir, if you will not sit down in my tent, you may as well so back to Lord Raglan. and tell him that I cannot move my Division." [In Cathcart's defence, Kinglake (Vol IV, 1868, p 96) stated: "*The truth is that, only a few days before, Lord Raglan had been induced by a similar report to send down 1000 men of the 4th Division, who had to be marched back when it proved that the enemy was not advancing. This was on the 21st of October.*"]

I touched my cap, and rode a few yards from the tent, to consider how it would be best for me to act under the circumstances. After a few minutes' thought I came to the conclusion that to return to Lord Raglan would be downright folly, for as he would doubtless not have remained near the Coll a considerable time must elapse before I could find him; and in the next place, I was aware that my own regiment, the 93rd Highlanders, was utterly without support, except from the cavalry, and that Balaklava might be taken. Never before had I been placed in so painful and embarrassing a position. My mind was, however, soon made up, for although I felt sure that the 93rd would fight as long as a man was left alive, I was determined to make one more effort to obtain help for my regiment.

I returned to Sir George, and stated firmly, but most respectfully, that I must decline to return to Lord Raglan; that I had been sent for the 4th Division, and that I should remain till it was ready; that much valuable time had already been lost, and that matters were probably now in a critical state at Balaklava [**Hence the decision to head for Kadikoi.**], and that I still hoped he would give orders for the division to turn out. Sir George listened very attentively to all I urged, and at last, to my great relief, said, "Very well, sir, I will consult with my staff-officers, and see if anything can be done." He then went away, and after a short time, to my great joy I heard the bugles sounding, and soon saw the division begin to fall in. [**In contrast, Ewart appears to have waited up to an hour!** Cathcart's report (see below) stated that he responded to a written order, received at 8.45 a.m.

ignoring Ewart's verbal order (delivered ca. 8.15 am). Cathcart therefore exercised his own discretion, contrary to Queen's Regulations (1844) "**30. ALL Orders sent by Aides-de-Camp are to be delivered in the plainest terms, and are to be obeyed with the same readiness as if delivered personally by the General Officers to whom such Aides-de-Camp are attached.**"] Having acquainted Sir George that the Quartermaster-General had desired that the division was on no account to march by the Woronzoff road, we started in the direction of the Coll, which was the only other route; for although infantry alone could have proceeded in a rather more direct line to Kadikoi, by descending the ridge which looked down on the Balaklava plain, it was very steep and at that time covered with brushwood, and the artillery of the division must in any case have gone by the Coll; in fact it was by far the best way for the 4th Division to move to the assistance of Sir Colin at Balaklava, which was the original order I had received from Lord Raglan himself.

Under the guidance of the staff-officers (who considered that Kadikoi was the point to aim for), the Division marched off to the Col. General Airey's instructions not to move by the Woronzoff road, were most proper ones, as the division would have had to move by fours, thereby causing delay, and would also have been liable, after descending to the plain, to be cut off or fired at by the Russians before reaching Balaklava; whereas by taking the other road, the division after passing the Coll could proceed on to Kadikoi under fire of the British guns on the heights, and without risk of being stopped by the enemy. Colonel Windham, the Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the 4th Division, was with Sir George, but the latter asked me also to remain by his side, and to show him where he was likely to find Sir Colin, stating that he himself had not previously been down to Balaklava. The distance from the camp of the 4th Division to Balaklava by the Woronzoff and Coll roads was about the same, but the distance to the first of the Turkish redoubts [R6] was much shorter by the former; we were, however, quite unacquainted with what had been going on in the meantime, on the plain of Balaklava, which was quite out of sight, and all that Sir George had to do at this time was to obey Lord Raglan's order, and proceed to the help of Sir Colin Campbell at Kadikoi.

On descending the Coll, just below which there was a vineyard, the division was proceeding to the right of it, and straight for Balaklava, when I noticed Captain Wetherall, Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster-General, galloping towards us. He called out, "You are going wrong," but we pursued our way in accordance with Lord Raglan's orders. On his coming up, he said he had fresh orders, and that the division was to keep to the left of the vineyard, in the direction of the nearest of the redoubts [**R6: The track from the Col to R6 and beyond was described on Biddulph's map of early October, 1854, as "Good Road with Easy Ascents".**] General Airey himself now rode up, and I heard him say to Sir George Cathcart, "Lord Raglan wishes you to advance immediately, and recapture the redoubts from the Russians." This order was given very plainly; and General Airey then turned towards me, and said, "Captain Ewart, you are acquainted with the position of each redoubt, remain with Sir George, and show him where they are." Sir George now made a short halt to form his division, and then advanced, desiring me to point out the various redoubts. On my doing so, he at once said, "You must be making a mistake." I replied No, that I had made no mistake. He then desired me to point them out again, and on my pointing to the farthest, which was on Canrobert's Hill, Sir George said, "It is impossible that there can be one so distant as that." I then explained that I had been employed in making a survey of the ground, and that I had been in the redoubt. He then observed, "Well, it is the most extraordinary thing I ever saw, for the position is more extensive than that occupied by the Duke of Wellington's army at Waterloo," at which battle he had been present. Some French troops had by this time descended to the plain, and also the brigade of Guards, and the 42nd and 79th Highlanders [*1st Division*] were, I think, coming down by a narrow path along the heights.

On arriving at the nearest redoubt [R6], we found it empty, and Sir George at first desired some of the Rifle Brigade to occupy it. He changed his mind, however, saying, "No, I shall want the Rifles; put some men of a red regiment in." We then moved on to the next redoubt [R5], where some more

men, I think, were left; and then approached the third [R4]. And now I must explain, that after the flight of the Turks, and during my absence, the Russian cavalry had advanced, and crossing the Woronzoff road, suddenly appeared on the ridge overlooking the plain of Balaklava, and close to the redoubt we had just passed [R5 : The Russian cavalry advanced between R4 and R5]. The British heavy cavalry were at the time moving down towards the 93rd Highlanders, not being aware of the approach of the Russians on the other side of the ridge. Directly General Scarlett observed the latter, the heavy brigade was halted and faced towards them. The Russian cavalry, which consisted of Hussars, Dragoons, and Cossacks, then advanced, detaching one body, who bore down towards the 93rd. The Earl of Lucan, who commanded the British cavalry in the Crimea, then sounded the charge, and the heavy brigade, led in the most gallant manner by General the Hon. J. Y. Scarlett, dashed at the Russians, the Greys and Inniskillings forming the first line, the 4th and 5th Dragoon Guards and the Royal Dragoons the second. The Russians, though far superior in numbers, were completely defeated, and retired precipitately down the valley on the other side of the ridge. It was just at this time that our light cavalry brigade should also have charged, as they would have completed the discomfiture of the Russian cavalry, and probably have taken many prisoners. The Earl of Cardigan, however, who was in command of it, considered that he was not justified in charging without special orders to do so. [Cardigan was very much criticised for his inaction.] The body of cavalry which had borne down towards the 93rd was received by the Highlanders in line, who at once opened fire, and the Russians abstained from charging home, bearing away to their left, and retiring over the ridge, Captain Ross [Robert Lockhart Ross, Capt & Bvt Maj, 93rd Foot] of the Grenadiers, wheeling up his company to the right, and giving them a parting volley. The state of affairs was now changed, there was no longer any risk of the capture of Balaklava, and the British prepared to take the aggressive, Lord Raglan having determined to recapture the redoubts still in possession of the enemy. With this object in view the heavy and light brigades were posted on the opposite side of the ridge, and facing the enemy, whilst orders were sent to stop the march of the 4th division towards Kadekoi, and to divert its course to the left.

We now come back to the period in the battle when the 4th Division was approaching the third redoubt (called No. 4) [R4], and when it first came under the enemy's fire. [From R3 and, perhaps, Bayonoff's Field Artillery?] Round shot now began to fly past us, and many riderless horses galloped by, some apparently belonging to the Greys. We found the redoubt deserted, but the guns had been overturned. Sir George now deployed his division into two lines, desiring the men to lie down, and directed his artillery [mainly E and P Batteries, RA] to open fire on the next redoubt (called No. 3.) [R3], which the enemy had retained possession of. Several rounds were fired [FAR more than "several" - ca. half of the total for the day! Cathcart's artillery fired off 388 shots; 1st Division fired none.], the Russians replying with their guns; but I heard an artillery officer observe that the range was too far. [R4 to R3 = ca. 1,240 yards (Reachable) : R4 to R2 = ca. 1670 yards (Unreachable).]

Battery	Division	9-lb Gun	9-lb Gun	24-lb Howitzer	24-lb Howitzer	Rockets	Total	% TOTAL *
		Round Shot	Shrapnel	Common Shell	Shrapnel		Shot + Shell	
E Battery RA	Light	103	34	21	41	0	199	23.10%
F Battery RA	3rd	14	0	0	9	0	23	2.70%
P Battery RA	4th	76	34	22	34	1	166	19.20%
Max Range	=>	1200 yds	600-1800 yds	350-1050 yds	350-1200 yds	N/A		
Shots Fired	=>	193	68	43	84	1	388	45.00%
Shots Weight	=>	0.78 tons	0.27 tons	0.46 tons	0.90 tons	-	2.41 tons	47.80%

[Max Range = Distance to First Graze : At extreme range, ricochets are much less likely. (W. S. Curtis)]

Table : Cathcart's Artillery : J.R.J. Jocelyn, "The History of the Royal Artillery (Crimean Period)", Murray, London, 1911 : p 217 (ex Adye's Order Book)

(* % TOTAL = % of Gun Ammunition expenditure (5.0 tons) for 25th October, 1854)

(Range data from L. H. Lefroy, "Handbook for Field Service", 1854)

The 1st battalion Rifle Brigade, under Colonel Horsford, was now sent forward to skirmish, and advanced so pluckily that in a short time the Russian fire from No. 3 redoubt ceased; the guns being, however, perhaps moved in consequence of the light cavalry charge. **[This would time the event after 11.30 a.m.]** I now went up to the ridge, and just as I crossed it, a party of horsemen rode by at full speed, one of them, who, I think, was an officer, calling out to me as he passed, "There is a staff-officer lying badly wounded in the front." I could not make out who they were, but I am now disposed to think that they were the last of our light cavalry who retired. I was unable at the moment to leave Sir George Cathcart, having been ordered to remain near him; but soon afterwards the Earl of Cardigan rode up, saying to Sir George as he did so, "I have lost the whole of my brigade," and at the same time pointing to a hole in his overalls, where, he said, a Cossack had stuck his lance. He then rode away. Our cavalry having been in the valley on the other side of the ridge, we had seen nothing of them, and had no idea that a charge had been made. I now crossed the ridge, and galloped forward in the direction of the enemy, and at no very great distance down the valley found, first of all, poor Nolan (Aide-de-Camp to General Airey), who had a dreadful wound in his chest, and was quite dead. A few yards farther on, and nearer to the Russians, lay Captain Morris, Deputy-Assistant-Quartermaster General, who had left headquarters only a day or two before, to assume command of the 17th Lancers. I at once dismounted and spoke to him, but he was almost insensible, and evidently did not know me. There was a terrible wound in his head, and one of his arms was also wounded. At a little distance off I found one of the heavy cavalry brigade, with his jaw frightfully smashed. I asked him what regiment he belonged to, but he was unable to speak, and only pointed to his buttons. I then saw that he belonged to the 5th Dragoon Guards. Having comforted him as far as I was able, I returned to Morris, and told him I would see that help was sent. I next turned my attention to the Russian cavalry, whom I could see at the far end of the valley, and many of whom were riding about amongst the British dead and wounded lying on the ground. As I could not lift Morris myself, I now rode back to No. 4 redoubt, and found that the Turks had returned to it. Making signs that I urgently wanted assistance, I at last persuaded about half-a-dozen to accompany me, and on reaching Nolan's body, got two of them to lift it. I then went on with the others to Morris and the Dragoon, but just at this moment the Russians opened fire, and one or two round shot whizzed by. In an instant poor Nolan was dropped, and away ran the whole of the Turks back to the redoubt. I could do nothing alone, so again went for help, and seeing some one on horseback (I don't remember who it was), begged him to go as hard as he could to the 17th Lancers, and to tell them that their Commanding Officer was lying badly wounded in front, and that some stretchers ought to be sent at once. He promised to go immediately, and I now returned to Sir George, whose division had remained stationary on the other side of the ridge. Some little time afterwards one or two stretchers appeared, and Morris, the Dragoon, and poor Nolan, were brought in - the Russians again firing. The last time I saw the former he was having his wounds looked to by a surgeon, on the side of the hill near No. 4 redoubt. The body of the latter was, I believe, buried the same afternoon in the ditch of No. 5 redoubt. Morris and the Dragoon Guardsman both, I am glad to say, recovered.

Sir George had recalled the Rifles, and had some conversation about this time with Sir Colin Campbell, who had ridden up. The Duke of Cambridge also came up close to No. 4 redoubt; and the Russians, seeing so many staff-officers together, at once opened fire, a cannon-ball, which passed close by me, striking the feather in the cocked hat of Major the Hon. J. W. B. Macdonald, one of the Duke's aides-de-camp. **[In the absence of higher authority, the British commanders must have discussed what to do.]** They also now began to move some more guns up to the Fedeoikine [Fediukine] heights, on the other side of the Long Valley. Having been desired by General Airey to remain with Sir George Cathcart, and having also heard the order given to the latter, I asked him about this time if it was his intention to try to recapture the other redoubts; but he replied No; that the position was much too extensive to be occupied; and that although he thought he could capture them, there would be a heavy loss without any object, as he would have to evacuate them afterwards. **[Canrobert was of the same opinion.]** He soon after said he would

write a note to Lord Raglan, acquainting him with the decision at which he had arrived, and that I was to take it. The note was written, but it was given to some other staff-officer who happened to come up. [That note has apparently not survived. Raglan was persuaded by Canrobert to abandon attempts to recapture the British guns and, as suggested by Cathcart, to give up Redoubts 3, 2 and 1. He decided to consolidate the British defences much nearer to Balaklava.] No farther advance was made, nor did the Russians attempt any forward movement; both sides, in fact, seemed to think that enough had been done, and the battle ended. The Guards and 4th Division returned afterwards to their respective positions before Sebastopol, but the 42nd and 79th Highlanders were left with Sir Colin, to assist in the defence of Balaklava."

Cathcart's 4-page manuscript report [**The writing and signature matches that of his letter of 8th July, 1843, concerning his father's death.**] reads as follows:-

"Morning Report 4 Division Octr. 26.1854

Sir,

Having at about 8.45 a.m. yesterday morning received a pencil order [**N.B. NOT a verbal order!**] to the effect that the 4 Division should move immediately down to the plain in front of Balaklava, as soon as it was possible I got the available portion of the Division, including those who had returned from the trenches and were capable of active service, under arms and marched, my Division amounting to 2,800. [**Ca. 60% of his nominal 4800 strength.**]

On descending into the plain after about a four mile march I was met by you [**Airey descended via the Col into the plain.**] and ordered to advance and occupy, if abandoned, and retake, if in possession of the Enemy, four of a chain of advanced and detached field works [**R6, R5, R4 and R3**] extending over a front of about two miles, and particularly directing my attention to the one on the extreme left [**R6**].

I distributed my force without halting into four attacking columns and gave them their direction, supporting with the 20 Regt. which remained and followed on as a reserve in the centre, and with which the Field Battery of the 4th Division [P Field Battery, 4th Coy, 12th Bn, RA], as well as those guns of the 3rd [**F Field Battery, 3rd Coy, 11th Bn, RA**] and Light [**E Field Battery, 1st Coy, 3rd Bn, RA**] Divisions, which had been attached to me, also moved.

Having ridden on to a commanding eminence I found the field work on the extreme left [**R6**], which is directly under the French lines, already reoccupied by the Turks and then quite out of reach of the Russians, and the second empty [**R5 : not occupied until after "The Charge".**], therefore moved every thing on to the right towards the 3, 4, 5 and 6 [**R4, R3, R2 and R1**] from the left, (by the bye to prevent mistakes, although I adopt the numbering of these works from left to right, in which order I received my instructions, I believe the Royal Engineers number them from the right in their plans.) [**Correct.**]

The 3 field work [**R4**], counting the two little mud redoubts [**R5 and R6**] as one [?], I found the Turks moving up to reoccupy, but as it was much exposed to fire from the next one [**R3**] and an explosion of ammunition took place in it, they showed strong symptoms of again leaving it, but having moved on the 20th Regt. to occupy the front and rear ditches the centre was occupied by the Turks.

The three next redoubts [**R3, R2 and R1**] including the right hand one [**R1**], the highest of the chain which rises abruptly out of the plain, were in possession of the enemy, and they not only fired with effect from two of them [**R3 and R2**] and two intermediate guns in battery, but showed considerable bodies of Infantry at times in a menacing attitude.

I formed the Division in one line, with the Rifle Brigade extending and about 200 yards in advance, my left resting on the redoubt [R4] occupied by the 20th Regt. and Turks. [This broadly accords with Asst-Surgeon Cattell's sketch of the position at ca. 11.10 a.m. (See my article in this Journal: 26(4), 14, 2009.)] The 1st Division was lower down near Balaklava in echelon to my right. I then brought all the guns at my disposal to the crest of slight eminence in front of my line and opened a battery of 10 Guns and Howitzers [mainly E and P Batteries, RA] on the two redoubts in possession of the enemy, by which the enemy's fire was soon silenced and in the redoubt [R3] next beyond that occupied by the 20th Regt. the magazine was blown up, and it was abandoned by the Enemy, as was also the next [R2]. [Jocelyn, op. cit., pp 208-209 has it: "...When General Cathcart received his orders to move on Balaclava, he delayed in carrying them into effect; and when Scarlett's charge was ended, he had only just descended from the Col and was moving in the direction of No. 4 Redoubt...On receipt of this order, the cavalry General [Lucan], seeing that the infantry were still at a distance, considered it his duty to wait for them, although the progress of the latter was slow. Cathcart at length reached No. 4 Redoubt and, throwing out skirmishers to his front, directed his artillery to engage the Russians in No. 3 Redoubt; but the range was long, and a desultory and ineffective fire was the only result." **[Not according to the gunshots fired and to Cathcart's Report! Beyond this point Cathcart made no efforts to advance.]**

I then communicated with Genl. Sir Colin Campbell in order to judge by his observation and knowledge of the ground and circumstances as to the propriety of attacking the last and strongest of the chain [R1] which still remained occupied by the enemy, but my own observation of a considerable force of infantry in my front which at one time seemed to prepare for an advance and Sir Colin Campbell's information that he had seen a considerable body of troops, somewhere behind it, decided me to refer to the Commander in Chief for orders and in the mean time remain in my own excellent position ready to receive an attack.

The Commander in Chief having sent for me and acquainted me with his decision to shorten the line of defences, which was disproportionate to our disposable force, by abandoning the outer chain of redoubts and drawing a more connected line down to Balaklava, and that I should therefore at night fall withdraw the troops and return with my Division and the guns attached to it to the camp above Sebastopol. I did so, and my Division was in camp by about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 P.M. [Raglan descended into the North Valley after 11.30 a.m., sent for Cathcart and gave him direct orders to withdraw his troops.] The casualties of the Division were one killed and three wounded and six Artillery horses killed or disabled. The two 12 lb. guns [from R4] and the remaining ammunition which has escaped explosion were withdrawn [By W Field Battery RA of the Balaklava defences] and sent to Balaklava previous to our departure.

I have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your most obedient,
Humble servant
Geo Cathcart Gnl 4th Divn.
The Qr. Mastr. Genl.

Related texts about Cathcart are worth reproducing here:-

Lord Lucan's comments on Cathcart were made in his speech to the House of Lords on 19th March, 1855:-

"...This previous order [The 3rd Order] was in the following words:- The cavalry to advance and take advantage of any opportunity to recover the heights." Very well. You have the map before you. The cavalry were to advance, and the order goes on to say, "They will be supported by

infantry, which has been ordered to advance in two fronts." Now, the infantry never were so ordered. The Duke of Cambridge never received any order to advance, nor did Sir George Cathcart; because my aide-de-camp went to Sir George to ask him, and he said he could not, because he had no instructions to do so. [N.B. This does NOT jibe with Cathcart's report!] (Hear, hear.) Under these circumstances, I did all I could do. I put myself in the position which Lord Raglan's aide-de-camp [**Lt-Colonel Poulett Somerset**] told me to take up, and I was waiting there for the co-operation of the infantry which was to support me - which infantry, for want of orders, were stationary, and had their arms piled.... As to recovering the heights, the fact was there was not a single Russian on the heights. In the morning redoubts 1, 2, 3, and 4, upon the evacuation of the Turks, became occupied by the Russians; but after the heavy dragoon charge the enemy evacuated No. 4, and there was not a single Russian until you came to No. 3 fort... There were no heights to recover, but there were three forts, Nos. 1, 2, and 3, to recover, and I know when the infantry were ordered down to our position it was intended to recover them. It was the wish of Sir George Cathcart to attack them, but it was thought that, as they could not be held, they were not worth the loss of life which would certainly attend any attempt to recover them."... The censure would have been thrown on you, you would have destroyed yourself. That is the opinion of every senior officer the opinion of every officer whose opinion was worth taking in that army. I am talking of living officers, but I will now give you the opinion of an officer who, unfortunately for the army and the country, is now no more. I mean Sir G. Cathcart. I will give his opinion with regard to that cavalry charge, and with regard to my conduct. (Hear, hear.) This is a letter which Sir G. Cathcart could not have anticipated I should have seen; it came under my notice by the merest accident. This opinion is contained in a letter written by Sir G. Cathcart to Lady Georgina Cathcart. This letter was on his person when he fell, and when taken from his body it was found that a bullet had passed through it. The letter was written on the 2d of November, three days before the battle of Inkermann and eight after the Balaklava charge, and the following is the extract which refers to it: "*I have another opportunity of writing to you. You will read about the affair at Balaklava in which the Light Cavalry Brigade suffered so severely. It was a most gallant, but unfortunate affair. Neither Lord Lucan nor Lord Cardigan was to blame, but on the contrary, for they obeyed orders...I was sent for with my division to set matters to rights, and did so as soon as we could arrive, but we had six miles to march....*" [**Correct.**]

William Howard Russell's introduction to "*The Crimean Diary and Letters of Sir Charles Ash Windham*", ed. Major H. Pearse, Keegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., London, 1897, recorded his conversation with Windham on the day after "The Charge" as follows:-

“...The appearance of these two great bodies of infantry, streaming down from the plateau into the Valley of Balaclava, produced, no doubt, a considerable effect upon the Russians; and Sir George Cathcart, a masterful man, who had already worked himself into a frame of mind conducive to violent enterprise, because his counsels, for an instant assault upon Sebastopol, had not been taken, was eager to dash at the Turkish redoubts, and had, indeed, whilst his skirmishers pressed forward and engaged the Russians in a brisk musketry encounter, occupied one of them [**Redoubt 4**], when he was once more ridden on the curb, and restrained from the bold offensive which he contemplated. The next day I rode up to the walled enclosure, which was subsequently named "*Cathcart's Hill*," because the General's Head-quarters were near the elevated ridge, whence there was an extensive view of the city front. There was a group of officers looking down towards the ground on the right, from which Evans' Division had that morning driven the Russians, who had come out to establish themselves in force upon it; and amongst them was Colonel Windham. Presently, he came to the place where I stood watching the movements of the troops on the extreme right towards Inkerman, and, with an abrupt "Good evening," asked me "if I had seen the cavalry charges down below the day before, and what I thought of the whole affair?" I said I had been all the morning in my tent, continuing the work of the night before, and writing about the battle. "And what have you written?" I said "I hoped it would all appear in good time." "I hope," said he, "that

you let people at home understand what a lot of muddling muffs we have out here. What on earth did they mean by hurrying us down there? Two divisions! And then making out that we were late! Late for what? Why, when we did want to do something, we were not allowed. I believe if my General had been allowed to go on, and the whole force had been advanced, we'd have shoved every manjack of these Russians up into the mountains, and retaken the guns. That's my private opinion, mind you! And I don't want my name in the papers."

Windham's own account appeared on pp 43-44 of that book, as follows:-

"October 25th.—Horsford [**Maj & Bvt Lt Col Alfred Horsford, 1/RB**] had just pointed out to me the confused masses of French upon the hill to our right, and I had just gone to point out the same to the General, when up galloped Captain Ewart, of the 93rd, and ordered us (the 4th Division) off to Balaclava. We got under arms immediately [**Surely incorrect! Cathcart obeyed a later written order.**] and, on arriving at the scene of action, were informed that the Turks had run off to a man without firing a shot,* running straight through our Cavalry Camp. The Russians instantly took possession of the position, but abandoned the greater portion of it on our approach. [Not instantly! The Russian withdrawal was associated with Cathcart's gunfire and the Charge of the Light Brigade.] ***This information was quite erroneous. The Turks defended No. 1 Redoubt very gallantly, and lost heavily.—W. H. R. [True.]**

The cavalry instantly went into action, and the Heavy Brigade did very well. Unfortunately the Light Brigade was ordered to charge, and they did so gallantly; but, being received by three times their numbers and three batteries of artillery, besides riflemen, they got cut up and driven back, losing about half their number. The 4th Division got there just as this charge was being made [**ca. 11.10 a.m.**], and the Russians abandoned two of the redoubts [**R3 and R2**], retaining only the one furthest to the eastward [**R1**]. Captain Nolan, who took the orders to Lord Cardigan, was killed, charging at the head of the Light Cavalry. Although a good fellow, from all I can learn, his conduct was inexcusable. His whole object appears to have been to have a charge at the Russians at any cost; but he could not have chosen a worse time. After the fight was over, and we had been pounded for the better portion of the day, we returned at night to camp, abandoning our original line as too extensive.

Further quotations from Kinglake's Vol IV (1868) are relevant:-

On p 115:- "Upon being apprised of the impending attack, Lord Raglan had at once ridden up to that part of the ridge which best overlooked the scene of the then commencing engagement; * ... Lord Raglan, however, was not without suspicion that the operations in the plain of Balaclava might be a feint, and that the real attack might be made from Sebastopol upon the besieging forces. He took care to make provision for such a contingency; and his oral directions [**As with Ewart's order**] for the purpose were conveyed by Captain Calthorpe, one of his aides-de-camp, to Sir Richard England, the Commander of the 3d Division." * **Lord Raglan was on the ground before the capture of Canrobert's Hill.**"

On p 119 :- "Liprandi...the actual result was, that from the seizure of Canrobert's Hill to the moment when the Allies were ready to come into action, there elapsed a period of some three hours. Canrobert's Hill is stated to have been taken at 7.30, and it was half-past ten before the Allies had any of their infantry reinforcements so far in advance as to be ready to undertake an attack."

On pp 222-223 :- "What he (Raglan) instantly sought to do was, to seize on the victory which this cavalry fight [**The Charge of the Heavy Brigade**] seemed to open to him by proceeding at once to the recapture of the Causeway Heights...The Duke of Cambridge, it would seem, had lost no time in obeying the order, and was as far in advance towards his assigned place as Lord Raglan expected

him to be;* but Cathcart unhappily had failed to march by the route prescribed to him, and was not yet on his appointed ground. Lord Raglan long before had been expressing his astonishment at not seeing Cathcart's battalions in march, and had sent messenger after messenger to endeavour to find where he was, and to learn the cause of his delay. [This accords with Cathcart's report, that he responded to a later written order to advance to protect Balaklava.] It is true that, before the moment we speak of, Cathcart's Division had at length made its appearance, but it still had a long way to march before it could commence the intended attack." * I found this upon what may be called proof of a negative kind; i.e., I have never seen or heard of any complaint in regard to the length of time occupied by His Royal Highness's march."

Discussion:-

It seems clear that Cathcart did, indeed, decline compliance with Raglan's verbal order. This is understandable, given the tired state of his troops - back from the trenches - and because of the 'wild-goose-chase' four days before. Ewart makes no mention of the existence of the second (written) order, which finally prompted Cathcart to action. Following the written order (to advance to defend Balaklava), he set off after 8.45 a.m. with six miles or so to lead his men and artillery. Raglan, however, was clearly alarmed by the delay and the changing situation. He sent messengers and, finally, no less than his Chief of Staff (Airey) to intercept Cathcart with new orders - to advance and (if need be) to retake **R6, R5, R4 and R3** on the Causeway Heights. I do not find it surprising that Cathcart was not in position at **R4** until ca. 10.45 a.m. I suggest that he then opened a significant cannonade of **R3** and other targets, continuing until ca. 11.30 a.m., i.e., after the "*Charge of the Light Brigade*". The Russians were forced to abandon **R3 and R2**, but held on to **R1**. I can accept (as per Windham and Lucan) that Cathcart was entirely willing to occupy **R3 and R2** and (even) to attack **R1**. After consulting Sir Colin Campbell, who very well knew the insecurity of the Causeway Heights positions, he adduced perfectly good reasons as to why he should not proceed with those actions. Helpfully, Ewart recorded that Cathcart sent a written message that **R3, R2 and R1** could be captured, with attendant losses, but that they would not be tenable thereafter. Raglan, urged by Canrobert, obviously came to the same conclusion and ordered the abandonment of those redoubts, together with the strengthening of the Balaklava defence lines.

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